

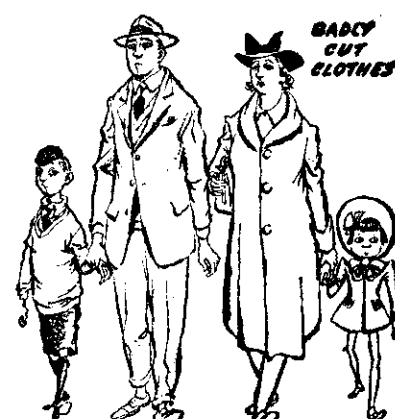
"WE New Zealanders, who are we?"

It's not the sort of question one gets asked every day, and it might make you stop and scratch your head for a moment. A quick answer might include all sorts of things. Something about a people mainly British in origin, prizing equality, tending towards expediency in politics and elsewhere; a people loving sport, especially football; with an antipathy to ideas and indifference to civilised drinking, and with a general tendency to badly cut clothes; a people fond of energetic open-air holidays, but lacking appreciation of their environment when it comes to building their cities; a people open, friendly and practical.

Would these go far to answering the question? The answer is no. We cannot really know who we are because after only 100 years we are still in the process of finding out. Think how often in the past 50 years some influential speaker or journal has announced that "a nation is born" when the announcement, if not the birth, was certainly premature. To name only two occasions, it happened when New Zealand troops first saw service overseas in World War I. Our pride in the fighting qualities of our troops and their status as "New Zealanders" was certainly justified, but an event like that does not in itself create nationhood. It happened again in 1946 when the National Orchestra gave its first concert. "A nation is born," someone said when the Orchestra played its last piece and the applause broke out on that historic night. But such events are merely signs that we are growing toward nationhood.

One of the signs of nationhood, in the sense of "knowing who we are," is the existence of a national literature. National myth and symbol are created first through words and the visual arts, and it is quite plain that our literature and painting, for instance, are still in the embryo stage. We have some fine poets, but very few short story writers and novelists of the same quality. The great New Zealand novel, when it does appear, surely won't come like some brilliant unexpected comet out of an empty sky, but when a host of lesser stars—novels, short stories, historical and social studies—have been shining in our firmament for some time. The recent prose award competition held by the quarterly *Landfall* drew only 25 entries. Commenting on this, the Editor wrote: "One reason without doubt is the sheer difficulty of breaking new ground to write imaginatively about life in this country. We have no well-established pictures of ourselves as a people and of the kind of life we lead or would like to lead, because there have been so few writers yet to construct any; the country and the people have very largely still to be created in terms of literature."

Writers in this sense are, of course, a tiny minority in any country. Theoretically a bigger population and



NEW ZEALAND

DAVID DELANY, talks officer at Dunedin, introduces a new series of broadcasts about New Zealanders, and why they behave as they do

more years behind us ought to result in more and better writers, but is it too far-fetched to wonder whether if Admass gets hold of us in the meantime, we might not, in fact, have fewer? Further, is it possible for a modern people to be so placed in history that they can have no literature, no art (or none to speak of) and hence no identity?

If it is important to try to discover who we are, and if there is no New Zealand literature to tell us, what does one do? Let us put the question another way. What sort of society are we creating here in New Zealand, how far is it a desirable one, what are our attitudes to important things like equality, religion, civil liberties, the arts, the family, leisure, personal relationships, etc., and even to more mundane things as food and drink? What is the implication for our society of the pattern made by each of these? The answers, honest answers, ought to tell us something useful about ourselves.

Take personal relationships. The New Zealand male already has a characteristic attitude in his social relationships with women, towards friends, and in his casual public encounters with other New Zealanders. For instance, have you ever watched a city crowd trying to board a Wellington or Auckland tram in the rush hour? Here our national ideal of equality becomes something that looks in practice very like "Women and children last." A trivial example you may say. Yet more than one Englishman has been appalled at our aggressive, inconsiderate behaviour in public. Road manners are another example. How many car drivers regularly use slowing down signals, or indicate that they intend to pass?

Of friendship: Is it true that the New Zealand idea of friendship is

something that tends to remain at the level of bar-room bonhomie, no matter how well the friend is known? Here again equality is one factor. We like to treat everyone the same. And, as our way of life does not encourage deep feeling in personal relationship, it is possible we have grown afraid of it. Does this in turn have anything to do with the fact that we drink too much alcohol? Are we emotionally immature?

What can we expect of the arts in New Zealand? What are our attitudes to literature, music and the visual arts? Do we care enough about civil liberties; are they being whittled away unnoticed? Is there not something characteristic in our attitudes towards religion? Why are there so many small religious sects in New Zealand? Perhaps it is an attempt to escape from conformity in other directions. On the whole, are we more irreligious than other countries?

It sounds, you may say, as though we can't do anything right. Haven't we any good points? Of course we have, but discussion of our virtues is less likely to be profitable than analysis of our weaknesses. Anyway, haven't we been called complacent before today?

It was with these thoughts in mind that we drew up a list of topics under the general heading "New Zealand Attitudes," and asked several speakers to analyse and comment upon them in a series of radio talks. The drawback to such a venture, as we soon became aware, is the lack of authoritative sociological studies upon which to base opinion and interpretation, such as Geoffrey Gorer's *The British Character*, or the classic study of Rowntree and Lavers, *English Life and Leisure*. But we felt that all the same we could find enough perceptive speakers who could in a frank and constructive way stimulate us to take a fresh look at the sort of people we are and what we might become.

Rev. George Naylor, of Cust, Canterbury, who has wide experience of pastoral ministry in town and country, will



discuss our attitude toward religion (4YC, Tuesday, June 11, 7.30 p.m.); M. K. Joseph, Senior Lecturer in English at Auckland University College, will talk about our attitude to the arts (4YC, Tuesday, June 18, 7.30 p.m.); Martin Finlay, a former Vice-President of the Auckland Wine and Food Society, talks about our attitude to food and drink (4YC, Tuesday, June 25, 9.30 p.m.). Phillip Smithells, Director of Otago University's School of Physical Education, is an Englishman who has lived in New Zealand a number of years. He will analyse our attitude to leisure (4YC, Tuesday, July 2, 8.0 p.m.). In a number of further talks, not yet scheduled, J. H. Robb, Senior Lecturer at Victoria University College's School of Social Science, will deal with Equality; a medical psychologist of Otago University, with the Family; Dr. C. G. Hill, Otago University Lecturer, in Education, with Personal Relationships; E. A. Olssen, Senior Lecturer in Political Science, Otago University, with Bureaucracy; and R. H. Brookes, Victoria College Lecturer in Political Science, with Civil Liberties. *New Zealand Attitudes* will be heard from other YC stations later in the year.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Nicolai Malko - - -	4
Ten Years of TIFH - - -	4
The Great Verdi Requiem -	5
The Two Worlds of J.S. Bach	5
4,000,000 Acres of Freedom -	6-7
Short Story: The Letter of February 14th - - -	8
Shepherd's Calendar - - -	9
Editorial - - - - -	10
Letters from Listeners - - -	11
Books - - - - -	12-13-14
First Hearings in Jazz - - -	15

Poet—and Murderer - - -	16
Films - - - - -	17
Open Microphone - - -	18
Violin and Voice - - -	19
Radio Review - - - - -	20-21
Ask Aunt Daisy - - - - -	22
Won't You Come In? - - -	23
Programme Guide - - - - -	24-25
"The Listener" Crossword -	26

BROADCAST PROGRAMMES
Mon. to Sun., June 10-16 - 27-47